



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **COUNTY WARNS FIRE VICTIMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING** *Camping Equipment, Portable Electric Generators, and Heaters Emit Carbon Monoxide*

As the cold and wet weather hits, the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) warns fire victims who are living in tents, mobile homes or campers to be aware of carbon monoxide (CO) hazards. Portable electric generators, propane heaters and camp stoves are designed for outdoor use, and can emit deadly CO gas. To avoid hazardous CO exposures, fuel-burning equipment such as camping stoves, camping heaters, lanterns, and charcoal grills should never be used inside a tent, camper, or other enclosed shelter.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, tasteless and odorless gas that reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness and confusion. In severe cases, it can cause loss of consciousness and death. Many people mistake these symptoms for a cold or flu.

Carbon monoxide is especially toxic to mother and fetus during pregnancy, infants, the elderly, and people with blood or circulatory system problems, such as anemia, or heart disease.

DEH recommends:

- Never burn charcoal or use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent.
- Do not use gasoline-powered tools and engines indoors.
- If you think you are experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, get fresh air immediately. Contact your health care provider immediately and tell them you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning for proper treatment.
- To stay warm at night, wear adequate clothing and use a thermally-rated sleeping bag to prevent hypothermia.

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